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AUTHOR Perry, Jesse
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ABSTRACT

Literature and the education process, if carefully selected, can give students a more realistic view of themselves, their history, their families, their peers, and others unlike themselves. The teacher should be able to select reading materials that will better acquaint students with similarities and dissemilarities in the lives of different racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. "Reading Ladders for Human Relations" lists books and develops themes that may be useful in helping students to understand better those individuals whose color, nationality, or religion is different from their own. This process enables students to discuss and examine preconceived ideas that they may have held about groups of people, and it may also help them to understand differences and to foster better human relations. A possible goal of a multicultural curriculum is to develop a program that will enable students to learn that people of different sexes, religious, and ethnic and social backgrounds can have common concerns. (SW)

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LITERATURE, A MIRROR TO UNDERSTANDING ONESELF AND OTHERS TODAY, TOMORROW AND YESTERDAY

Ancient Chinese wisdom counsels: "Those who want to leave an impression for one year should plant corn; Those who want to leave an impression for ten years should plant a tree; But those who want to leave an impression for 100 years should educate a human being."

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Jesse Perry

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GREAT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT AND CHANGES IN HUMAN RELATIONS ACROSS ETHNIC LINES ARE TAKING PLACE AT THIS VERY MOMENT IN HISTORY THROUGHOUT THIS LAND. POLARIZATION BETWEEN ANGLOS AND NON-ANGLOS HAS DEEPENED IN MANY AREAS OF OUR COUNTRY. THE "COMING TOGETHER" OF THESE GROUPS, IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF COMMUNITY, WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT IF A CONSCIOUS EFFORT IS NOT MADE TO BRING ABOUT SOME DEGREE OF RESPECT AND APPRECIATION FOR THESE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

EACH STUDENT LIVES IN MANY WORLDS -- THE WORLDS OF HIS FAMILY, HIS NEIGHBORS, HIS PEER GROUP, HIS ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND, AND HIS POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. EDUCATION FOR A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY MUST PREPARE ALL STUDENTS TO LIVE SUCCESSFULLY AND CREATIVELY; TO APPRECIATE AND VALUE EACH PERSON FOR HIS WORTH AS A HUMAN BEING, AND TO FUNCTION AT HIS MOST EFFECTIVE LEVEL AS A CITIZEN OF THIS COUNTRY. A VIABLE LITERATURE PROGRAM IN HUMAN RELATIONS CAN ASSIST IN BREAKING DOWN THOSE INVISIBLE WALLS OF RACE, COLOR, SEX, RELIGIOUS, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BARRIERS THAT SEPARATE HUMAN BEINGS FROM EACH OTHER, ESPECIALLY THOSE CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS THEY

DISCOVER THE TRUE MEANING OF "THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN" AS A PROCESS IN UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE HUMAN CONDITION.

"THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE CAN BE A POTENT MEANS OF NOURISHING THE DEMOCRATIC APPRECIATION OF EACH HUMAN BEING AS AN INDIVIDUAL, UNOBSCRUED BY ANY GROUP LABEL -- RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, NATIONAL, SOCIAL, OR ECONOMIC -- WHICH MAY BE APPLIED TO HIM. THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE POTENTIALITIES OF THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM IS A RESPONSIBILITY MORE CRUCIAL THAN EVER BEFORE. THE ATOMIC BOMB HAS SHOCKED US INTO AWARENESS OF THE LIFE-AND-DEATH URGENCY OF MANY LONG-PRESENT AND BASIC MORAL PROBLEMS OF OUR AGE. . . . THE EXISTENCE OF WIDESPREAD HABITS OF PREJUDICED FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD MANY GROUPS IN AMERICA IS RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE VITAL THREATS TO THE HEALTH OF OUR DEMOCRACY. THE ULTIMATE CURE WILL DEPEND ON THE RESHAPING OF MANY FACTORS -- SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC -- IN OUR SOCIETY, BUT TO ALL SPHERES OF AMERICAN EDUCATION FALLS A MAJOR TASK -- THAT OF HELPING AMERICAN YOUTH TO FREE THEMSELVES FROM PREJUDICE AND TO BECOME CAPABLE OF CREATING TOGETHER IN MUTUAL RESPECT A SOCIETY OF FREE MEN." [1]

THE PRECEDING QUOTATION BY DR. LOUISE ROSENBLATT WAS EXTRACTED FROM THE FOREWORD TO A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT FOCUSED ON RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE AND WHICH APPEARED IN THE JUNE 1946 EDITION OF THE ENGLISH JOURNAL.

DR. ROSENBLATT MADE THAT STATEMENT ALMOST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO--A QUARTER OF A CENTURY! YET, IF THE REFERENCE TO THE ATOMIC BOMB WERE OMITTED AND SUBSTITUTED WITH REFERENCES TO THE HYDROGEN BOMB AND ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILES, THE STATEMENT COULD ALSO SERVE WELL FOR THE SEVENTIES.

HER REMARKS THEN, AS NOW, WERE DIRECTED AT THOSE WHO TEACH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE. HER STATEMENT, THEREFORE, HELPS TO SET THE TONE FOR THE SEVERAL THOUGHTS I'VE SET DOWN FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

LITERATURE SERVES AS A MIRROR BY WHICH MAN IS REFLECTED; THEREFORE, IT IS THROUGH BOOKS THAT ONE MIGHT GAIN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY, IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY, OR WHOSE ETHNIC, CULTURAL, OR RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM ONE'S OWN. IT IS, THEN, THE PURPOSE OF READING LADDERS FOR HUMAN RELATIONS TO LIST BOOKS THAT MAY INCREASE THE SOCIAL SENSITIVITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND EXTEND THEIR EXPERIENCES, APPRECIATIONS, AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR LIFE STYLES AND THE LIFE STYLES

OF OTHERS. ALDOUS HUXLEY SUGGESTS ONE OF THE BEST GOALS FOR THE BEST SOCIETY IS TO SENSITIZE ITS MEMBERS TO THE FEELINGS OF PERSONS CULTURALLY DIFFERENT FROM THEMSELVES. LITERATURE, THEREFORE, CLARIFIES AND ILLUMINATES THE WAYS PEOPLE OF A PARTICULAR CULTURE OR ETHNIC GROUP LIVES. HUXLEY FURTHER POINTS OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MAN FOR "INVESTIGATING, ORDERING, AND COMMUNICATING THE MORE PUBLIC OF HUMAN EXPERIENCES." ON THE OTHER HAND, HE MAINTAINS THAT LITERATURE IS INDISPENSIBLE BECAUSE "ITS MAIN CONCERN ... IS WITH MAN'S MORE PRIVATE EXPERIENCES AND WITH THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE PRIVATE WORLDS OF SENTIENT, SELF-CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUALS AND THE PUBLIC UNIVERSES OF OBJECTIVE REALITY..." INFORMATION ALONE, HOWEVER, IS NOT ENOUGH TO EFFECT ATTITUDE CHANGE. THERE STILL NEEDS TO BE A "GUT LEVEL" EXPERIENCE, EVEN IF MERELY VICARIOUS, FOR THERE TO BE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN ONE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD A DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS, OR ETHNIC GROUP.

BOOKS CAN PLAY A UNIQUE ROLE IN FOSTERING BETTER HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IF THOSE BOOKS SELECTED GENUINELY AND

REALISTICALLY REFLECT THE MULTI-CULTURAL AND MULTI-ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THAT SOCIETY. THE INSIGHTS GAINED FROM THIS EXPOSURE MAY BE RELATED TO THOSE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT EXIST; SUCH AS, FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS, RACIAL ISOLATION, POVERTY, AND RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE YOUNG READERS MAY FACE.

THE BOOKS ANNOTATED IN THE FIFTH EDITION OF READING LADDERS FOR HUMAN RELATIONS DEVELOP FOUR THEMES. THE THEMES EXPLORE THE INDIVIDUAL'S CONCEPT OF HIMSELF; HIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FAMILY, PEERS, AND OTHERS, OR HIS ALIENATION FROM THOSE GROUPS; HIS APPRECIATION OR LACK OF APPRECIATION OF PERSONS FROM OTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, OR ETHNIC; AND HIS NEED TO COPE WITH CHANGE, INCLUDING ALL OF THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES CHANGE CAN PRODUCE.

THE THEMES IN READING LADDERS REPRESENT POINTS OF VIEW ON WHICH PEOPLE MAY TAKE ISSUE. BECAUSE ONE LIVES IN A MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY, IT IS ONLY THROUGH DIVERSITY OF OPINION AND HONEST APPRAISAL OF THOSE OPINIONS THAT WHOLESOME RELATIONSHIPS CAN EVOLVE. TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS SHOULD USE THE THEME GROUPINGS MERELY AS SUGGESTIONS AND

DEVELOP THEIR OWN GROUPINGS FOR PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL STUDENT NEEDS.

ONCE AGAIN, BOOKS IN THE FOUR LADDERS: (1) CREATING A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE, (2) LIVING WITH OTHERS, (3) APPRECIATING DIFFERENT CULTURES, (4) COPING WITH CHANGE ARE LISTED WITH THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES IN MIND: TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE; TO CREATE A SENSITIVITY TO THE EXPERIENCES, NEEDS, AND FEELINGS OF OTHERS; TO DEVELOP AN APPRECIATION OF DIFFERENCES AS WELL AS SIMILARITIES AMONG PEOPLE; TO EXTEND INSIGHTS INTO DIFFERENT LIFE STYLES; AND TO HELP CHILDREN AND YOUTH ADJUST TO CHANGE IN A DYNAMIC, DEMANDING WORLD. BECAUSE OF THE COMMITTEE'S PRIMARY INTEREST IN FOSTERING HUMAN RELATIONS, THE MEMBERS CHOSE BOOKS THAT HAD THE MOST RELEVANT CONTENT. BY THIS CRITERION SOME BOOKS THAT ARE NOT OF WHAT SOME MIGHT CALL "SUPERIOR LITERARY MERIT" MAY ALSO BE LISTED. THESE MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AS PLACE HOLDERS. IN ADDITION, MANY OLDER OR CLASSIC TITLES WHICH DO PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE INCLUDED, EVEN THOUGH IN TIME OR SETTING THEY MAY OFTEN SEEM SOMEWHAT REMOTE FROM THE SEVENTIES. UNFORTUNATELY, FEW BOOKS EXIST WHICH ACCURATELY REFLECT CERTAIN IDENTIFIABLE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL GROUPS. HOWEVER, FORCES CURRENTLY AT WORK IN

THE AMERICAN AND WORLD SOCIETIES ARE BRINGING ABOUT CHANGES IN ATTITUDE WHICH MAY INFLUENCE THE FUTURE PUBLICATION OF SUCH BOOKS.

A HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM CENTERED AROUND LITERARY EXPERIENCES HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR CLARIFYING MORAL IMPERATIVES AND EXPANDING SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS READERS EXPLORE THE PROBLEMS OF RACISM, POVERTY, AND CULTURAL ISOLATION. LITERATURE CAN CREATE A MEANINGFUL AWARENESS OF THE SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL FACTORS THAT ARE INHERENT IN A MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY. THESE DIFFERENCES MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED IF THERE IS TO BE A "REAL" EXTENSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

LIBRARIANS AND TEACHERS MAY JOINTLY CONTRIBUTE TO A SCHOOL HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM THROUGH BOOKS. THE TEACHER'S ENTHUSIASM FOR BOOKS MAY CARRY OVER INTO HOW A STUDENT RELATES TO BOOKS. OFTEN, THERE IS AN INCREASED WILLINGNESS TO SHARE READING EXPERIENCES WHEN THE TEACHER HAS INSTILLED IN THE STUDENT THE WILL TO READ, ESPECIALLY IF THE BOOKS HAVE RELEVANCY FOR THOSE EXPERIENCES BROUGHT BY THE STUDENT TO A PARTICULAR READING ACTIVITY.

THE LIBRARIAN, BY CALLING THE ATTENTION OF THE TEACHER TO THE WIDE VARIETY OF VICARIOUS EXPERIENCES PRESENTED IN BOOKS, CAN ENLARGE THE TEACHER'S PERCEPTION AND HELP HIM TO SEE MANY ADDITIONAL FACETS OF A PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, A CLASS MAY HAVE DISCUSSED HOW PHYSICAL HANDICAPS AFFECT THE ADJUSTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO GROUPS, TO FRIENDS, TO SELF-CONCEPTS. ASKED TO DEVELOP A READING PROGRAM AROUND SUCH A THEME, A THOUGHTFUL LIBRARIAN SUGGESTS NOT ONLY BOOKS ABOUT PHYSICAL HANDICAPS, BUT ALSO BOOKS ABOUT SOCIAL HANDICAPS, SUCH AS RACIAL IDENTITY OR LACK OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY. LIBRARIANS CAN NAME, FROM THEIR WIDE KNOWLEDGE, BOOKS THAT OFFER EXPERIENCES RELEVANT TO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF AND CONCERNS OF STUDENTS. TEACHERS CAN PROVIDE FOR THE DISCUSSION OF BOOKS IN ORDER TO DEVELOP GROUP APPRECIATIONS AND ATTITUDINAL CHANGE.

IN PLANNING FOR THE USE OF BOOKS, TEACHERS MUST CONSIDER PARTICULAR GOALS. THEY MUST PROJECT A SEQUENCE OF STEPS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS AND MUST SELECT THE MATERIAL APPROPRIATE TO EACH STEP. TWO GOALS ARE ALL IMPORTANT: (1) APPRECIATION OF COMMON HUMAN NEEDS AND VALUES, AND (2) SENSITIVITY TO THE DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES AMONG PEOPLE, THEIR

OPPORTUNITIES, CULTURAL VALUES, AND EXPECTATIONS. TEACHERS MAY HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON AREAS WHERE DIFFERENCES CURRENTLY HINDER COOPERATION BETWEEN GROUPS AND ON AREAS WHERE EXTENSION OF EXPERIENCE IS NEEDED.

BECAUSE RACISM AND RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY ARE STILL THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL ISSUES YOUNG READERS WILL HAVE TO FACE IN THE SEVENTIES, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT STUDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPENLY AND FREELY DISCUSS, WITH EXPERT GUIDANCE, ALL OF THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THESE PERTINENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THAT LITERATURE SELECTED SHOULD AFFORD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS; IT CAN SERVE AS A VEHICLE FOR FOSTERING CONVERSATION, FOR WHAT THE STUDENTS DO WITH THOSE IDEAS AND PERCEPTIONS GAINED FROM READING AND DISCUSSING THE LITERATURE IS REALLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF A READING PROGRAM IN DEVELOPING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.

WHERE SO EASILY AS IN LITERATURE CAN STUDENTS LEARN TO SEE PEOPLE AS PEOPLE. NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES AFFORD ONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE PEOPLE AS INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE HOPING, SEARCHING, AND REACHING FOR THAT SOLUTION TO A PARTICULAR URGENT HUMAN PROBLEM.

LITERATURE, BY ITS VERY NATURE, CAN SERVE AS A WINDOW ON THE WORLD. WHAT BETTER VEHICLE FOR EXPOSING ALL STUDENTS TO THE FACT THAT ALL COLORS OF MEN SHARE IN WHAT WE LIKE TO CALL THE "HUMAN CONDITION." POETRY, AS A VEHICLE FOR LITERARY COMMUNICATION, OFFERS AN INVALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EXPRESSION OF SELF. THROUGHOUT THIS PAPER I SHALL CITE SEVERAL POEMS REPRESENTING THE WORKS OF VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS. THE FOLLOWING POEM IS BY A FORMER BLACK STUDENT OF MINE AT MC CLYMONDS HIGH SCHOOL IN OAKLAND.

FLAMINGO
by Reginald Lockett

I am one
whose thoughts
are more complex
than the thoughts
of those who live
in the same habitat
as I. I sit,
daily apart, and dream
of a bridge
I would like to cross
someday.

The pimps, their girls,
and the hoods
stare in amazement,
hunch each other
and say, "Look at that punk.
There he goes."
They are unaware
that the word "punk"
has a variety of meanings.

I will rejoice
when the day comes
when I shall depart
from this host
of incipient squares.

I am the black Flamingo
I stand out among all the rest.
Since I am so rare
I am set aside from all the others.

POEM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN:

DRUMS*
by Peter La Flange

From the Indian reservation to the governmental school,

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*A Western Sampler, MacMillan Gateway English, 1967.

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THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS MADE BY FRANK ROSS, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, IN HIS FOREWORD TO BARBARA DODD'S BOOK, NEGRO LITERATURE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL. HIS ORIGINAL STATEMENT FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON THE INCLUSION OF BLACK WRITERS IN THE AMERICAN LITERATURE CURRICULUM; IT IS MY CONTENTION THAT HIS STATEMENT HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS AS WELL.

"WHAT IS INSIDE OF A WRITER COUNTS, WHETHER HE IS LAME LIKE BYRON, OR OBESE LIKE AMY LOWELL, OR BLACK-SKINNED LIKE JAMES BALDWIN. THE LITERATURE HE PRODUCES MUST STAND ON ITS

OWN MERITS, EVERYONE REASONS. BUT IT SHOULD BE EQUALLY REASONABLE THAT THAT LITERATURE MUST HAVE SOME PLACE TO STAND.

LITERATURE BY NEGROES THROUGH THE PAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS HAS FOUND A PUBLISHER ONLY RARELY, AND IN THE PAST SCORE OF YEARS HAS FOUND, ONCE PUBLISHED, A PERSON EVEN RARER TO PROMOTE IT IN THE MARKET PLACE. THIS HAS LED QUITE NATURALLY TO TEXTBOOKS IN OUR SCHOOLS THAT ARE NOTABLE FOR THEIR ABSENCE OF NEGRO WRITERS AND NEGRO THEMES."

"ABSENCE OF A SEGMENT OF SOCIETY, IN A SENSE, FALSIFIES LITERATURE, FOR A MAJOR MERIT OF LITERATURE IS THAT IT BROADENS AND DEEPENS EXPERIENCE .... A GREAT LITERATURE IS RELEVANT TO PEOPLE AND TO SOCIETY AS THEY ARE, AND AMERICAN LITERATURE SURELY IS NOT RELEVANT IF IT IGNORES OVER TEN PER CENT OF THE AMERICANS. FOUNDATIONS ARE WHAT ENGLISH TEACHERS BUILD. IF THEY TEACH A LITERATURE THAT IS MARKEDLY WITHOUT NEGRO WRITERS, THEY ARE SAYING IMPLICITLY EACH DAY, BOYS AND GIRLS, LET'S OPEN OUR BOOKS TODAY AND READ ABOUT WHAT WHITE PEOPLE DO AND THINK. SOME TEACHERS DO NOT KNOW THEY ARE

IMPLYING THIS; SOME WHITE STUDENTS DO NOT KNOW IT. MOST NEGRO STUDENTS DO--A CRUSHING CONCEPT OF WORTHLESSNESS, WHICH MUST BE TRUE BECAUSE BOOKS DO NOT LIE; ONLY WHITE PEOPLE HAVE DONE ANY THINKING, FEELING, ACHIEVING WORTH SETTING DOWN. IS IT THIS TRAGIC FOUNDATION ENGLISH TEACHERS SEEK TO BUILD? PERHAPS MORE TRAGIC THAN THE NEGRO STUDENT WHO CANNOT FIND AN ACCEPTABLE SELF IMAGE IN HIS SCHOOL LITERATURE IS THE WHITE STUDENT WHO IS DEPRIVED OF A FULLY ROUNDED EDUCATION IN LITERATURE."

IF AN AMERICAN LITERATURE IS TO BE TAUGHT, IT SHOULD REFLECT THE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS OF ALL ETHNIC AND CULTURAL GROUPS THAT COMPRISE THIS MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT APPEARED IN THE DECEMBER 1970 ATLANTIC:

"I RECOGNIZE NO AMERICAN CULTURE WHICH IS NOT THE PARTIAL CREATION OF BLACK PEOPLE. I RECOGNIZE NO AMERICAN STYLE IN LITERATURE, IN DANCE, IN MUSIC, EVEN IN ASSEMBLY LINE PROCESSES WHICH DOES NOT BEAR THE MARK OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO."[2]

THE ABOVE QUOTATION MAY ALSO HOLD TRUE FOR THOSE OTHER IDENTIFIABLE NON-WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS IN THIS COUNTRY. THE LITERATURE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES NOT ONLY HAS VALUE IN ITSELF, IT CAN HAVE VALUE FOR THE LITERATURE CURRICULUM AS WELL. IF WE CONTINUE TO OMIT THIS LITERATURE FROM THE CURRICULUM, WE WILL END UP TEACHING RACISM TO WHITE YOUNGSTERS AND SELF-HATRED TO ASIANS, AMERICAN INDIANS, CHICANOS, AND BLACKS.

WHAT BETTER WAY IS THERE TO CREATE VIABLE AND MORE POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS THAN THROUGH THE STUDY OF A MULTI-ETHNIC LITERATURE, FOR IT IS THROUGH LITERATURE THAT ONE GAINS INSIGHTS INTO THOSE ASPECTS OF THE "HUMAN CONDITION": NAMELY, PAIN, HOPE, LOVE, HAPPINESS, SORROW, AND DREAMS AS THEY TOUCH THE LIVES OF ALL PEOPLE.

THE INCLUSION AND THE STUDY OF A MULTI-ETHNIC LITERATURE CAN ENHANCE ONE'S APPRECIATION FOR DIFFERENCES; IT IS THIS ORCHESTRATION OF DIFFERENCES IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY THAT CAN, THROUGH THE STUDY OF THIS LITERATURE, PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH THOSE EXPERIENCES THAT CAN HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES AND OTHERS AS A METHOD OF LIVING MORE CREATIVELY WITH THEIR FELLOWMEN.

REFLECTIONS OF AN INARTICULATE CHILDHOOD
by Orlando Ortiz (Puerto Rican)

the caves were lit

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SMOKE
by Josef Rodriguez (Mexican-American)

My brother, a closed sphere,

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BEACH ALONG L STREET
by Chiang Yee (Asian-American)

Sea and sky are one color without horizon.

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THE EXCLUSION OF SUCH ETHNIC LITERATURE FROM THE CURRICULUM CAN PERPETUATE THE CANCER OF RACISM. RALPH ELLISON MAKES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT CONCERNING THE EFFECT OF BIASED WRITING:

> "PERHAPS THE MOST INSIDIOUS AND LEAST UNDERSTOOD FORM OF SEGREGATION IS THAT OF THE WORD. AND BY THIS I MEAN THE WORD IN ALL ITS COMPLEX FORMULATIONS, FROM THE PROVERB TO THE NOVEL AND STAGE PLAY, THE WORD WITH ALL ITS SUBTLE POWER TO SUGGEST AND FORESHADOW OVERT ACTION WHILE MAGICALLY DISGUISING THE MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ACTION AND PROVIDING IT WITH SYMBOLIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION. FOR IF THE WORD HAS THE POTENCY TO REVIVE AND MAKE US FREE, IT HAS ALSO THE POWER TO BLIND, IMPRISON, AND DESTROY." [3]

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE ANOTHER ASPECT HERE, AND THAT IS A FEW COMMENTS ON EDUCATION, IN GENERAL, AS IT RELATES TO HUMAN VALUES. THE SCHOOL, IN MY VIEW, HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE THOSE LEARNING EXPERIENCES, ASSISTED BY THE INDIVIDUAL, WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THAT INDIVIDUAL'S UNDERSTANDING OF AND APPRECIATION OF HIMSELF AS WELL AS OTHERS.

I AM SUGGESTING HERE THAT THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, THROUGH READING LADDERS FOR HUMAN RELATIONS, INCLUDE THOSE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO COPE WITH AND ANALYZE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY AND BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES IN THE LIFE STYLES OF OTHER GROUPS. HOWEVER, MERELY EXPERIENCING A VICARIOUS ENCOUNTER WITH THE ABOVE-NAMED ASPECTS OF THE HUMAN CONDITION DOES NOT MEAN THAT ONE WILL DEVELOP LASTING CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THERE BE CONTINUOUS EXPLORATION THROUGH DISCUSSION AND IDENTIFICATION.

THE "ROCKEFELLER REPORT" ON EDUCATION ENTITLED "THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE" SUGGESTS THAT EDUCATION SHOULD INCLUDE OPPORTUNITIES TO EVALUATE HUMAN BEHAVIOR. THIS REPORT STATES:

"THERE SHOULD BE A GENERAL RECOGNITION THAT DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S POTENTIALITIES OCCURS IN A CONTEXT OF VALUES. EDUCATION IS NOT JUST A MECHANICAL PROCESS FOR COMMUNICATION TO THE YOUNG OF CERTAIN SKILLS AND INFORMATION. IT SPRINGS FROM OUR MOST DEEPLY ROOTED CONVICTIONS. AND IF IT IS TO HAVE VITALITY, BOTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS MUST BE INFUSED WITH THE VALUES WHICH HAVE SHAPED THE SYSTEM."

"WHAT MOST PEOPLE, YOUNG AND OLD, WANT IS NOT MERELY SECURITY OR COMFORT OR LUXURY--ALTHOUGH THEY ARE GLAD ENOUGH TO HAVE THESE--THEY WANT MEANING IN THEIR LIVES. IF THEIR ERA OR CULTURE AND THEIR LEADERS DO NOT OR CANNOT OFFER THEM GREAT MEANINGS, GREAT OBJECTIVES, GREAT CONVICTIONS, THEN THEY WILL SETTLE FOR SHALLOW AND TRIVIAL MEANINGS!" [4]

FINALLY, ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION, I BELIEVE, IS TO CREATE IN A PERSON THE ABILITY TO LOOK AT THE WORLD FOR HIMSELF AND TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON HIS OWN PERCEPTIONS OF THAT WORLD.

LITERATURE, THEREFORE, CAN PROVIDE THE SPRINGBOARD INTO A WORLD THAT IS INHABITED BY A VARIETY OF ETHNIC AND CULTURAL GROUPS. FOR TOO LONG NOW, WE HAVE ONLY BEEN EXPOSED TO THAT LITERATURE GROUNDED IN THE WESTERN TRADITION AND PRIMARILY FROM A WASP PERSPECTIVE. WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HAPPENS TO THAT BLACK, BROWN, YELLOW, OR RED CHILD AS HE SITS IN AN "AMERICAN LITERATURE" CLASS AND DISCOVERS THAT HIS VERY PRESENCE IS BEING DENIED BY THE OMISSION OF HIS LITERATURE FROM THE CURRICULUM?

IF THAT LITERATURE TO BE USED IN OUR SCHOOLS REALISTICALLY REFLECTS THE MULTI-CULTURAL AND MULTI-ETHNIC POPULATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY, THEN IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT STUDENTS WILL BEGIN TO GET A BETTER VISION OF THEIR OWN HISTORY AND WORTH AS THEY ENCOUNTER THOSE HUMAN EXPERIENCES THAT ARE NOT NECESSARILY ALIEN TO THEIR OWN CONDITION. "LITERATURE," SAYS DWIGHT BURTON, "PLAYS AN IMPORTANT PART IN DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF THE COMMONNESS OF THE HUMAN DRAMA." [5]

FINALLY, TO QUOTE DR. ROSENBLATT AGAIN FROM HER ARTICLE ENTITLED "A WAY OF HAPPENING":

"LITERATURE CAN COMPENSATE, THUS, FOR THE LIMITATIONS OF TIME AND PLACE AND CLASS AND NATION; CAN COMPENSATE, TOO, PERHAPS IN SOME DEGREE, FOR THE LIMITATIONS AND THE SORROWS OF THE HUMAN CONDITION."

LITERATURE CAN ALSO REFLECT AN IMAGE OF MAN SO THAT HIS UNDERSTANDING OF SELF AND OF OTHERS WILL AID IN HELPING TO RELIEVE THE PAIN OF RACISM, BIAS, AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME POSSIBLE GOALS OF A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM:

1. To develop a curriculum that will enable all students to understand and accept as valid individual and group differences among people.
2. To develop a curriculum that will enable students to realize that people of different religious, ethnic, sex, and socio-economic statuses can have common concerns and can work together to solve common problems.
3. To develop a curriculum that will enable all students to see the similarities in all people as a process of understanding the human condition.
4. To provide teachers with resources necessary for the achievement of a multicultural curriculum; e.g., inservice education, materials, and consultants.

OBJECTIVES OF A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM

1. To help teachers to understand the need for, and the value of, multicultural curricula.
2. To help teachers to develop teaching strategies that will give students an understanding of, and an ability to live in, a pluralistic society.
3. To help teachers to develop teaching strategies for assisting students to value each person as a human being.
4. To help teachers know themselves and their students as a process of overcoming their own fears of different social groups.
5. To develop methods for evaluating student learning.

COGNITIVE OBJECTIVES

Each student shall:

1. Develop an awareness of the genre of representative minority literature through discussions and criticism.
2. Study literature written by members of minority cultures.
3. Identify literary contributions of members of minority cultures.
4. Understand why language patterns differ.
5. Identify the value systems reflected in the writings of members of minority cultures, and explain why these value systems were developed.

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES

Each student shall:

1. Understand why members of minority cultures in the United States fell isolated.
2. Understand the value systems of members of minority cultures.

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES (Continued)

3. Know why people are different and learn to respect and accept these differences.
4. Develop a desire to read more in the area of minority literature.
5. Develop an awareness of the Asian, Black, M xican, and Native American literature in that there is a freedom to respond to various stimuli as presented by the literature.
6. Develop an understanding of himself, his differences and likenesses as they relate to each member of his class and how these differences have affected people.
7. Develop an understanding of the voice of minority literature as a means of expressing the results of racism and prejudice in the United States.

MAJOR GOALS AND RELATED EXPECTANCIES THAT ARE BASIC TO A MULTI-CULTURAL CURRICULUM:

1.0 KNOW MANY FORMS IN WHICH COMMUNICATION OCCURS, AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Related Educational Expectancies. Each individual educated to this goal should or should be able to:

1.1 Comprehend that two-way understanding is necessary for effective communication to occur.

1.2 Understand how attitudes, values, and emotions are communicated in both verbal and non-verbal ways.

1.3 Communicate his own values in an effective manner.

1.4 Recognize and respect the feelings and expression of others.

1.5 Examine and recognize the difference between fact and opinion.

2.0 UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

Related Educational Expectancies. Each individual educated to this goal should or should be able to:

2.1 Consider himself to be a worthwhile individual.

2.2 Recognize the inherent worth of every individual.

2.3 Take into account individual differences in people.

2.4 Understand that economic, cultural, and social influences cause individuals and groups to think and act in diverse ways.

3.0 ARE AWARE OF AND SENSITIVE TO VALUE SYSTEMS

Related Educational Expectancies. Each individual educated to this goal should or should be able to:

3.1 Analyze differing points of view and demonstrate willingness to re-evaluate his own in terms of them.

3.2 Realize that individuals with different value systems may s solve common problems together.

3.3 Recognize and/or develop the necessary techniques in the areas of literature, the social sciences, and the fine, performing, and practical arts.

READING LADDERS FOR HUMAN RELATIONS WHICH USES MULTIETHNIC AND MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE SELECTIONS AS A VEHICLE MAY, IN THE WORDS OF ED FARRELL IN HIS ESSAY ON LITERATURE AND THE RESURRECTION OF SELF,

" . . . ENABLE ONE TO SEE VISTAS NEVER BEHELD BEFORE; ENCOUNTER ALIEN

CULTURES; WITNESS ACTS OF BOTH SUPREME COURAGE AND SIMPERING COWARDICE; COME TO KNOW COMPASSION, INTEGRITY, CRUELTY, INSENSITIVITY, LONELINESS, JOY, FEAR, AND THE SELFLESS LOVE IN WHICH, PARADOXICALLY, SELF HAS MOST OFTEN BEEN FOUND AND MOST LUCIDLY EXPRESSED; AND TO KNOW THESE NOT AS PHILOSOPHICAL AND LINGUISTIC ABSTRACTIONS, BUT AS HUMAN BEHAVIORS WHICH CONFIRM OUR OWN HUMANITY." YES, THOSE LITERATURE SELECTIONS FOUND BETWEEN THE COVERS OF THE FIFTH EDITION OF READING LADDERS FOR HUMAN RELATIONS MAY ASSIST STUDENTS, THEN, TO DETERMINE THEIR TRUE RAISON D'ETRE (TRUE REASON FOR BEING) AS THEY EXPERIENCE THEIR WORLD, AND OTHERS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF LITERATURE OF TODAY, TOMORROW, AND YESTERDAY.

JP:aw
9/20/73

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